

AMENDED CLAIM SET:

1. (currently amended) ~~Cellulose triacetate~~ A cellulose acetate which is soluble in an organic solvent and ~~has a substituent consisting essentially of an acetyl group and further~~ has a carboxyl group and a sulfonic acid group and contains alkali metal, alkaline earth metal, or both alkali metal and alkaline earth metal, wherein said cellulose ~~acetate triacetate~~ has at least one feature selected from the group consisting of the following features (i), (ii), and (iii):

(i) at least part of the carboxyl groups in said cellulose ~~acetate triacetate~~ are free carboxyl groups, ~~and said cellulose acetate has a pH of 4.5 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry;~~

(ii) said cellulose ~~acetate triacetate~~ contains at least one member selected from the group consisting of an acid having an acid dissociation exponent pKa of 1.93 to 4.50 in water, an alkali metal salt of said acid, and an alkaline earth metal salt of said acid, ~~and has a pH of 4.5 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry;~~ and

(iii) the alkali metal, or the alkaline earth metal, ~~or both alkali metal and alkaline earth metal is~~ are present in said cellulose ~~acetate triacetate~~ in an amount such that the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose ~~acetate triacetate~~ is 5.5×10^{-6} equivalent or less in terms of ion equivalent.

2. (currently amended) ~~A cellulose triacetate~~ The cellulose acetate according to Claim 1 having at least feature (iii), wherein the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose ~~acetate triacetate~~ is 2.5×10^{-6} equivalent or less in terms of ion equivalent.

3. (currently amended) ~~A cellulose triacetate~~ The cellulose acetate according to Claim 2, wherein the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose ~~acetate triacetate~~ is 1×10^{-6} equivalent or less in terms of ion equivalent.

4. (currently amended) ~~A cellulose triacetate~~ The cellulose acetate according to Claim 1 having at least feature (ii), wherein the acid has a pKa value of 2.0 to 4.4.

5. (currently amended) ~~A cellulose triacetate~~ The cellulose acetate according to Claim 1 having at least feature (ii), wherein the acid of feature (ii) is at least one organic acid selected from the group consisting of an aliphatic monocarboxylic acid, an aliphatic polycarboxylic acid, a hydroxycarboxylic acid, and an amino acid.

6. (currently amended) ~~A cellulose triacetate~~ The cellulose acetate according to Claim 5 ~~having at least feature (ii)~~, wherein the acid of feature (ii) is at least one organic acid selected from the group consisting of a saturated or

unsaturated C₁₋₃ monocarboxylic acid, a saturated or unsaturated C₂₋₄ dicarboxylic acid, a C₁₋₆ hydroxycarboxylic acid, and an amino acid.

7. (currently amended) ~~A cellulose triacetate~~ The cellulose acetate according to Claim 6 having at least feature (ii), wherein the acid of feature (ii) is at least one member selected from the group consisting of formic acid, haloacetic acid, halopropionic acid, acrylic acid, malonic acid, succinic acid, glutaric acid, fumaric acid, glycolic acid, lactic acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, and citric acid.

8. (currently amended) ~~A cellulose triacetate~~ The cellulose acetate according to Claim 1 having at least feature (ii), wherein the total content of the acid of feature (ii), the alkali metal salt of the acid, and the alkaline earth metal salt of the acid is 1×10^{-9} to 3×10^{-5} mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose ~~acetate triacetate~~.

9. (currently amended) ~~A cellulose triacetate~~ The cellulose acetate according to Claim 8 having at least feature (ii), wherein the total content of the acid of feature (ii), the alkali metal salt of the acid, and the alkaline earth metal salt of the acid is 1×10^{-8} to 2×10^{-5} mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose ~~acetate triacetate~~.

10. (currently amended) ~~A cellulose triacetate~~ The cellulose acetate according to Claim 9 having at least feature (ii), wherein the total content of

the acid of feature (ii), the alkali metal salt of the acid, and the alkaline earth metal salt of the acid is 1×10^{-7} to 1×10^{-5} mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose ~~acetate~~ triacetate.

11. (currently amended) ~~A composition comprising a cellulose triacetate comprising the cellulose triacetate compound of Claim 1 in the form of a slurry, wherein the slurry has a pH of 4.5 to 6.0 acetate that has a carboxyl group and a sulfonic acid group and contains alkali metal, alkaline earth metal, or both alkali metal and alkaline earth metal, wherein said cellulose acetate has at least one feature selected from the group consisting of the following features (i), (ii), and (iii):~~

~~(i) at least part of the carboxyl groups in said cellulose acetate are free carboxyl groups, and said cellulose acetate has a pH of 4.5 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry;~~

~~(ii) said cellulose acetate contains at least one member selected from the group consisting of an acid having an acid dissociation exponent pKa of 1.93 to 4.50 in water, an alkali metal salt of said acid, and an alkaline earth metal salt of said acid, and has a pH of 4.5 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry; and~~

~~(iii) the alkali metal, the alkaline earth metal, or both alkali metal and alkaline earth metal is present in said cellulose acetate in an amount such that the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1~~

gram of the cellulose acetate is 5.5×10^{-6} equivalent or less in terms of ion equivalent.

12. (currently amended) ~~A cellulose triacetate~~ The cellulose acetate composition according to Claim 11, wherein the slurry which has a pH of 4.8 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry.

13. (currently amended) ~~A cellulose triacetate~~ The cellulose acetate according to Claim 1, wherein the average degree of acetylation is from 58 to 62.5%.

14. – 17. (cancelled).

18. (currently amended) ~~A dope containing the cellulose triacetate of Claim 1~~ cellulose acetate and an organic solvent, wherein the cellulose acetate is soluble in an organic solvent and has a carboxyl group and a sulfonic acid group and contains alkali metal, alkaline earth metal, or both alkali metal and alkaline earth metal, wherein said cellulose acetate has at least one feature selected from the group consisting of the following features (i), (ii), and (iii):

(i) at least part of the carboxyl groups in said cellulose acetate are free carboxyl groups, and said cellulose acetate has a pH of 4.5 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry;

(ii) said cellulose acetate contains at least one member selected from the group consisting of an acid having an acid dissociation exponent pKa of 1.93 to 4.50 in water, an alkali metal salt of said acid, and an alkaline earth metal salt of said acid, and has a pH of 4.5 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry in a proportion of not more than 7.7×10^{-7} mole per 1 gram; and

(iii) the alkali metal, the alkaline earth metal, or both alkali metal and alkaline earth metal is present in said cellulose acetate in an amount such that the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose acetate is 5.5×10^{-6} equivalent or less in terms of ion equivalent.

19. (cancelled).

20. (previously presented) A method for improving the releasability of a film from a support which comprises casting a dope of Claim 18 on the support.

21. (cancelled).

22. (cancelled)

23. (previously presented) A dope according to Claim 18, wherein said organic solvent comprises a halogenated hydrocarbon.

24. (cancelled).

25. (cancelled).

26. (currently amended) The cellulose ~~acetate according to triacetate~~ of claim 1 having at least feature (ii), wherein the total content of an alkali metal and alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of said cellulose triacetate is 0.01 x 10⁻⁶ to 5 x 10⁻⁶ equivalent ~~an effective amount or more not interfering with heat resistance of the cellulose triacetate.~~

27. (previously presented) The cellulose ~~acetate according to triacetate~~ of claim 1, wherein said cellulose ~~acetate is soluble in an organic solvent and triacetate is insoluble in water.~~